

Awards Banquet story continued...

Col. Rich Green, wing commander, also presented awards to the First Sergeant of the Year and the Second Lieutenant of the Year.

Senior Master Sgt. Richard Schuller was honored with the first sergeant award. Schuller is the first shirt for the security forces squadron. He joined the Air Force in 1973 and came to the 179th AW in 1982. He holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Akron.

"Senior Master Sgt. Schuller is extremely organized and conscientious," said Lt. Col. Joe Wendling, security forces commander. "We have been mobilized for more than a year now and he has been an invaluable piece of our operation. Suffice it to say we would be in a genuine fix in some areas if it were not for him. He is dependable, loyal and has a dedication to duty rarely seen in today's world."

First Lieutenant Craig Devore was honored with the Second Lieutenant of the Year award for his work in civil engineering. Devore is an engineering officer with the 179th AW and has been with the Air Force and National Guard since 1987. He

graduated with honors from the University of Akron and is a member of Cornerstone Community Church.

"I was very honored to be nominated for this award," Devore said. "I think my feelings were probably similar to the other award nominees. I felt proud of my past accomplishments, a little nervous about being there with so many important people, suspense as the nominees were announced and then a little bit shocked when I heard I had won. Overall, it was a great evening I'm sure I will not forget."

With the five top honors out of the way, Master Sgt. Randy Dunham, wing historian and awards banquet emcee, focused the audience on the Public Affairs Award and the Family Support Group Volunteer of the Year Award.

The Public Affairs Award is presented to the unit member who best represents the spirit of community service while not in uniform. Lt. Col. Michael Howard, communications flight commander, received the award for his work with the Richland County United Way Campaign, the Urban Minority Alcohol and Drug Abuse Outreach Program and

his active public speaking schedule.

"I believe we have an obligation to give something back to our community," Howard said. "Awards like this are reflective of our organization as a whole. I'm extremely grateful and thankful to be a member of this outstanding organization."

Paige Williams, 179th Family Support Group president, presented the Volunteer of the Year Award to Sheila Larson. Williams said Larson was at the unit helping out in anyway she could during the numerous unit deployments and helped found the family support group program more than a decade ago.

Two final awards were presented to members of the community for their continuing support of the 179th AW. Green presented Jim Gorman, chairman of Gorman Rupp Pumps and Ralph Ridenour, CEO and owner of Universal Digital Communications with special plaques for their tireless efforts to assist the unit.

Gorman summarized the evening's events and sentiments by telling the crowd, "I've watched this organization for years and there is no better organization than the 179th."

Ash dies at 82

On Sept. 26, 2002, Ann C. Ash, wife of former 179th Commander William O. Ash, died. A pilot in her own right, Ash graduated from Bliss College in Columbus and learned to fly and earned her commercial pilot rating, flying with the Civil Air Patrol during World War II.

After the war, she opened the Williard Airport and operated one of the largest GI Bill Flight Schools in Ohio. She was one of the first distributors for Beech Bonanzas and Piper Aircraft.

She was a life member of the Ninety-Nines, an international association for female pilots, and chartered the first Japanese chapter.

She was an active member of the community, a wife of 53 years, a mother of three, grandmother to two and an avid supporter of the 179th AW.



Safety First

Lt. Cols. Mark Lynskey (left) and Brian Lake (right) proudly display the safety award presented to the 164th Airlift Squadron for surpassing 125,000 safe flying hours. The last time the unit had an attributable accident was in 1967.